

Master Planning News

Governor Tommy G. Thompson Centennial State Park Peshtigo River State Forest

June, 2003 Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 4

In this Issue:

- ◆ Draft Preferred Alternatives
Governor Thompson
State Park Revised
- ◆ April Public Meetings
Reviewed
- ◆ Draft Alternatives Reflect
Many Views
- ◆ Peshtigo River State
Forest Management



Features:

- | | |
|---|---|
| What did you think? | 2 |
| Management on the
Peshtigo River State
Forest | 4 |

*Department of Natural Resources
Northeast Region Headquarters
1125 N. Military Ave.
PO Box 10448
Green Bay, WI 54307-0448
(920) 492-5800*



State Park Preferred Alternatives

After weeks of meeting, brainstorming, discussing, and analyzing the preferred alternatives for Gov. Thompson State Park have been revised. Thank you to all who took the time to contribute! The draft management alternatives were first presented to you in the April 2003 edition of *Master Planning News* and then at the Public meetings

FEATURES

**South entrance, from
Ranch Road**

**Maintain existing
forest in healthy
condition**

**Limited boundary
expansion**

**Recreational features
appear rustic with
some comforts**

(See full text on page 3.)

held on April 15 & 16. They focused on issues of park entrance, park boundaries, vegetation management goals, and recreation development within the Park. Public comment, input from the Basin Partners Team, and review from the Guidance Team and comparison with the Vision and Goals statement were all considered.

April Public Meetings Reviewed

The DNR recently held two public meetings, April 15th in the Township of Stephenson, and April 16th in Green Bay. About 45 or 50 people attended each, despite icy road conditions in Green Bay. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss the alternatives for Gov. Thompson State Park and to gather public comment and opinion regarding the alternatives. An open-forum style meeting enabled attendees to view maps, charts, and photographs set up around the room and a chance to talk one-on-one with DNR staff in an informal setting. Flip chart tablets and maps were set up around the room to record comments generated through discussion. Also, a public opinion sampler was

distributed at the meetings. This opinion sampler asked the public to express their preference regarding the park entrance (north v. south), park boundary (expansion v. no change), managing vegetation (natural succession, maintain existing, or restore pre-settlement forest conditions)

and recreation development (four options with varying levels of development) or to share their own alternative suggestions. Although not a formal survey, the sampler provided useful information on the public's preferences for the park. *(See page 2 for details of the opinion sampler.)*



Public Meeting, Township of Stephenson, 4/15/03



Green Bay Meeting Check-in, 4-16-03



Discussing Park Alternatives at the Public Meeting in Green Bay

What did you think?

Over the last few months we have received hundreds of letters, emails, and phone calls from you with input regarding the potential Alternatives for Governor Thompson State Park. The Master Planning Team considers all comments, and we appreciate your help! Those of you who attended one of the recent public meetings also had the opportunity to indicate your Alternative preferences on a public opinion sampler. Here is a brief summary of the results:

PARK ENTRY ALTERNATIVE:

Total Comments: 59

Support North Entry: 14%

Support South Entry: 86%

PARK BOUNDARY ALTERNATIVE:

Total Comments: 54

Support Boundary Expansion: 33%

Support No Boundary Change: 67%

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVE:

Total Comments: 59

Support Pre-Settlement Conditions: 12%

Support Natural Succession: 22%

Support to Maintain Existing Conditions: 66%

RECREATION DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE:

Total Comments: 70

Support Low Development: 23%

Support Mid Development: 46%

Support More Development: 23%

Support High Development: 8%

Total Master Plan Comments to Date: 1,509

Draft Alternatives Reflect Many Views

Margaret Mead once stated that we should “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed that is the only thing that ever has.” This statement rings true for the master planning process for Gov. Thompson State Park. Throughout master planning, members of the public, various recreation clubs, and numerous DNR staff have met and discussed the management alternatives for Gov. Thompson State Park. Together, we have formed a group of “thoughtful, committed citizens”. Although we are not quite ready to “change the world”, we are working

together to create the best master plan for the new State Park. The draft management alternatives on page 3 are the result of a decision making process that draws from all our input. From the beginning of the planning process we have solicited public opinion, both in person at public meetings, and in newsletters. We have conferred with the Upper Green Bay Partner Team, met with staff on the Core Team, and we have reported to and consulted with the DNR Guidance Team on a regular basis. We have also used the guidance provided in NR 44, our master planning Code. The process of master planning is

a way to “find the common ground” amongst all of the inputs and opinions gathered. It is important to keep in mind that while the preferred management alternative for Gov. Thompson State Park reflects a mixture of opinions, the park still can’t be all things to all people. It just isn’t possible without conflicts. But, it will provide the public with a colorful variety of recreational opportunities, habitat, landscapes, and educational activities that are as diverse as the group of people that came together to create them. Thanks for you help and input in the master planning process!

Draft Preferred Alternatives Governor Thompson State Park

Entrance Governor Thompson State Park will have a single entrance from the south off of Ranch Road. The actual entrance road alignment will be changed from the existing road to avoid paralleling the nearby high voltage line and provide more visual interest.

Boundary Additional land will be acquired from willing sellers if needed to protect an important resource, improve use area or facility development, buffer incompatible uses, provide access control or clearer boundary lines, or for other compelling reasons. A park boundary showing modest boundary expansion will be delineated in the proposed master plan draft.

Vegetation Management The vegetation will be managed to provide an appropriate balance among existing timber types, with some areas of pine barrens/oak barrens restored for educational purposes. Special emphasis will be placed on maximizing the health and vigor of the red oak stands growing on sandy soils to protect against pests like the gypsy moth and forest tent caterpillar. The Department has a policy of Managing to promote Big Tree Silviculture where the sites are capable of growing large, long-lived trees. Managing for White Pine as an associated species with the Oak is an alternative that can be encouraged through natural regeneration and periodic improvement thinnings. White Pine was a component of the forest that was removed during the logging era in this area. Management for public health and safety and the accommodation of recreational development will also occur.

Recreation Facilities and Development The recreational facilities will include some modern conveniences, but the appearance of park structures and facilities will tend toward an informal "Northwoods" style. Proposed development may include, but is not limited to:

Road System

Utilities

Administrative Headquarters for the park

Public Toilets

Shop/Storage Building

Systems of single-use and multi-use State Park trails. Hiking, xc-skiing, horseback riding, off-road bicycling, and snowshoeing, are examples.

A paved bike path

Relocation of Ranch Road snowmobile trail on state property (See note below.)

Camping of several types:

Rustic hike-in/water access campsites

Rustic outdoor group

Horse-and-rider camp (See note below.)

Traditional tent/trailer family-campground with flush toilets and showers

Rustic indoor group camp

Improved Boat access to Caldron Falls Reservoir within the park

Interpretive Center

Day Use Areas such as picnic facilities, play areas...

Non motorized water access to the inland lakes

Manage the deer herd on the property when necessary, by controlled hunting methods.

Note: Snowmobile Trail Relocation

The Department of Natural Resources is committed to working with local snowmobile organizations, to delineate a pass-through snowmobile route that will eliminate the use of Ranch Road as a snowmobile route. The specific alignment of such a trail will be determined on site by DNR staff and must be located to prevent conflicts with other winter uses. When a pass-through route is designated a land use agreement will be negotiated between the DNR and the organization responsible for the trail. Upon relocation of the trail from Ranch Road it is expected that use of the road right-of-way (Ranch Road) as a snowmobile route will cease.

(Definition: A *pass-through trail* provides passage through a property via a route that creates the least amount of disruption, the least amount of environmental impact, and causes the least possible amount of user conflict.

Note: Horse Trails and Camping

The Department of Natural Resources will work with members of the horseback riding public to designate a bridle trail on park property. In recognition of the adjacent Peshtigo River State Forest lands, the Department will defer designation of a Horse-and-Rider Camp location until the Peshtigo River State Forest Master Plan is closer to completion. This will assure the best location is chosen.



Management on the Peshtigo River State Forest

By Sara Pearson, Peshtigo River State Forest Ranger

“So, what exactly *do* you do?” I can’t tell you how many people ask that question when I tell them I am the Ranger/Assistant Property Manager of the Peshtigo River State Forest (PRSF). My quick answer is, “I maintain, range, and administrate the state forest.” In my longer answer I include my duties of managing the PRSF- 5,300 acres of former Wisconsin Public Service (WPS) hydroelectric lands along the Peshtigo River and its flowages. The forest is growing too, and later this year approximately 450 acres will be added to the forest. Then in 2004, the remaining 3400 acres of WPS land will be added to include 9,200 acres total!

*For master plan information
please contact:*

Dan Rogers

DNR Northeast Region
Landscape Architect &
Property Planner
1125 N. Military Ave.
PO Box 10448
Green Bay, WI 54307
Email:
Daniel.Rogers@dnr.state.wi.us
Phone:
(920) 492-5839

For local information:

Governor Thompson State Park

N1000 Paust Lane
Crivitz WI 54114
(715) 757-3779

We're on the Web!



www.dnr.state.wi.us

**DNR
NE Region Headquarters
1125 N. Military Ave.
PO Box 10488
Green Bay, WI 54307**

Historically, when this land was under WPS ownership, it was open to public recreation and actively managed for timber and wildlife habitat. Today, it continues to remain open as the PRSF! The state forest is open to a variety of public activities: hunting, hiking, horseback riding, canoeing, canoe camping, fishing and boating, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing, among other things. The forest currently maintains 6 boat landings around Caldron Falls, High Falls, and the Potato Rapids. A major winter project for the forest staff was making signs for these landings, which you may see as you are in the area. The property encompasses a very large area, and we are currently spending considerable time investigating special resources, needs or problems in the forest. We will also be posting our boundaries, which will not only help us in knowing where our property is, but it will help you to know that you are on state land. As we explore, we have been finding an increasing number of trespassing and encroachment issues that we will clear up. Until the Master Plan for the forest is completed, we cannot do a lot of work in terms of development. We have been trying to maintain the property to the same standard that WPS had done in the past. Replacing gates or barriers, working on the cross-country ski trails, maintaining the roads into the fly fishing area, and clearing out the canoe campsites are some examples of these maintenance activities. Also as a certified law enforcement officer in the state of Wisconsin, I enforce all Wisconsin Administrative codes and state statutes on the PRSF property.

The PRSF is designated a “northern state forest,” just like the Brule and Black River State Forests are. Whereas both State Parks and State Forests are in the DNR, their purposes under state law, as well as their management and recreation styles differ. One of the key differences is that state parks emphasize more developed camping experiences - modern bathroom facilities and electrical campsites, as well as more intensive trail and recreational areas. Northern state forests emphasize rustic campgrounds with pit toilets, remote camping and recreation such as hunting and snowmobiling. Northern forests, like state wildlife areas, are more actively managed for specific habitats than are state parks which occurs through timber harvest, planting, prescribed burning activities. State Forests also use timber harvest to help create specific habitat for game or rare species in addition to being a source of revenue.

That’s the long answer to what I do in my job. Since this is a new property, and the PRSF staff is relatively new, we are continually learning. However, we’re excited to be able to provide a state forest in this area and look forward to serving you.

